

BEFORE THE TENNESSEE REGULATORY AUTHORITY
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

November 6, 2003

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IN RE: Implementation of the Federal) Docket No. 0-00491
Communications Commission's Triennial)
Review Order-9 Month Proceeding-Switching)
)

**OBJECTIONS OF BIRCH TELECOM OF THE SOUTH, INC. TO BELL SOUTH'S
FIRST REQUEST FOR PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS (1-21)**

Pursuant to the *Order On October 21, 2003 Status Conference issued October 27, 2003* ("Procedural Order"), Birch Telecom of the South, Inc. ("Birch") submits its preliminary objections to BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc.'s ("BellSouth") First Request for Production of Documents to Birch.

Birch files these objections to comply with the ten (10) day requirement set forth in the *Procedural Order*. These objections are preliminary in nature. Should additional grounds for objection be discovered as Birch prepares its responses to any discovery, Birch reserves the right to supplement these objections.

Further, at the time of the filing of these objections, the issues to be addressed in this proceeding have not yet been identified. Should additional grounds for objections develop as the TRA identifies the issues to be addressed in this proceeding, Birch reserves the right to supplement these objections.

GENERAL OBJECTIONS

Birch makes the following general objections to the Requests:

1. Birch objects to the "Definitions" section, the "General Instructions," and the individual request items of BellSouth's First Requests for Production of Documents to Birch to the extent that they are overly broad, unduly burdensome, and/or oppressive. Birch will attempt

to identify specific requests to which this objection applies within the specific objections that follow.

2. Birch objects to the “Definitions,” the “General Instructions,” and the individual request items to the extent they are irrelevant and not likely to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence. By way of illustration and not of limitation, Birch objects to requests for documents that are unrelated to or inconsistent with the parameters and methodology for the impairment analysis that the FCC prescribed in its Triennial Review Order. Birch will attempt to identify individual requests to which this general objection is applicable within the specific objections that follow.

3. Birch objects to the “Definitions,” the “General Instructions,” and the request items to the extent they are vague, ambiguous, imprecise, or utilize terms that are subject to multiple interpretations but are not properly defined or explained for purposes of these Requests.

4. Birch objects to the “General Instructions” and the request items of BellSouth’s First Set of Requests for Production to Birch to the extent that they purport to impose discovery obligations on Birch that exceed the scope of discovery allowed by the applicable Tennessee Rules of Civil Procedure.

5. Birch objects to the “General Instructions” section and the individual request items of BellSouth’s First Requests for Production to Birch to the extent that the “instructions” purport to seek disclosure of “each,” “every” or “all” documents, materials or information in Birch’s possession. Birch’s responses will provide all nonprivileged and otherwise discoverable information obtained by Birch after a reasonable and diligent search conducted in connection with the Requests. Such search will include a review of only those files that are reasonably expected to contain the requested documents and/or information. To the extent that “instructions” or individual requests require more, Birch objects on the grounds that compliance

would be unduly burdensome, expensive, oppressive, or excessively time consuming, and unnecessary to accomplish BellSouth's legitimate discovery needs.

6. Birch objects to BellSouth's First Requests for Production to the extent that the requests seeks discovery of materials and/or information protected by attorney/client privilege, the work product doctrine, the accountant/client privilege, or any other applicable privilege.

7. Birch objects to BellSouth's First Set of Requests for Production to the extent that the requests would require disclosure of trade secrets and/or confidential and proprietary information that either should not be disclosed at all or should be disclosed only subject to the terms of a mutually acceptable confidentiality agreement and the orders and rules of the TRA governing confidentiality.

8. Birch objects to all requests which would require the production of materials and/or information which is already in BellSouth's possession or is in the public record before the TRA. To duplicate information that BellSouth already has or is readily available to BellSouth would be unduly burdensome and oppressive.

9. Birch objects to BellSouth's First Request for Production to the extent BellSouth seeks to impose an obligation on Birch to respond on behalf of subsidiaries and/or former officers, employees, agents, and directors on the grounds that such requests for production are overly broad, unduly burdensome, oppressive, and not permitted by applicable discovery rules.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIONS TO REQUESTS

Birch hereby incorporates by reference the above general objections. In addition, to the extent possible given the expedited time frame for preliminary objections, Birch will identify specific requests that are subject to objection. Birch reserves the right to add to or enlarge upon these objections when it files its responses.

REQUEST NO. 1: Produce all documents identified in response to BellSouth's First Set of Interrogatories.

OBJECTION: As stated in the above General Objections, Birch objects to the request for "all documents" on the grounds that such request would be overbroad and unduly burdensome. Birch also objects to the extent Request No. 1 seeks confidential and proprietary business information. Birch incorporates by reference its Objections to the First Set of Interrogatories.

REQUEST NO. 2: Produce every business case in your possession, custody or control that evaluates, discusses, analyzes or otherwise refers or related to the offering of a qualifying service in the State of Tennessee.

OBJECTION: Birch objects to Request No. 2 on the grounds that it seeks documents that are irrelevant to the issues in this case and are not reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence, given the FCC's determination in the Triennial Review Order that the state commissions' impairment analyses are not to be based on individual carriers' business models. Birch also objects on the grounds the request seeks the disclosure of confidential and proprietary business information. Birch objects to the request for "every" document for the reasons stated in General Objections.

REQUEST NO. 3: Produce all documents referring or relating to the average monthly revenues you receive from end users customers in Tennessee to whom you only provide qualifying service.

OBJECTION: Birch objects to the request on the grounds it seeks documents that, because they relate to aspects of Birch' individual business model, are irrelevant, and not reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence. Birch also objects to the request for "all documents" on the grounds that such request would be overbroad and unduly burdensome. Birch objects on the grounds that the request seeks confidential and proprietary business information

REQUEST NO. 4: Produce all documents referring or relating to the average number of access lines you produce to end user customers in Tennessee to whom you only provide qualifying service.

OBJECTION: Birch objects to the request for "all documents" on the grounds that such request would be overbroad and unduly burdensome. Birch also objects on the grounds that the request seeks confidential and proprietary business information.

REQUEST NO. 8: Produce all documents referring or relating to the classifications used by Birch Corporation to offer service to end user customer Tennessee (e.g., residential customers, small business customers, mass-market customers, enterprise customers, or whatever type of classification that you use to classify your customers).

OBJECTION: Birch objects to the request for "all documents" on the grounds that the request is overbroad and unduly burdensome. Birch will make reasonable efforts to provide documents that establish and describe the classifications used by Birch.

REQUEST NO. 9: Produce all documents referring or relating to the average acquisition cost for each class or type of end user customer served by Birch, as requested in BellSouth's First Set of Interrogatories, No. 34.

OBJECTION: Birch hereby incorporates its objections to Interrogatory No. 34. Birch objects on the grounds the request seeks documents that are irrelevant to the issues in this case and is not reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence, inasmuch as the FCC has ruled in the Triennial Review Order that the impairment analysis is not to be based on individual carriers' business models. In addition, Birch objects to Request No. 9 on the grounds that the request seeks confidential and proprietary business information. Birch also objects to the request for "all documents" as overbroad and unduly burdensome.

REQUEST NO. 10: Produce all documents referring or relating to the typical churn for each class or type of end user customer served by Birch , as requested in BellSouth's First Set of Interrogatories, No. 35.

OBJECTION: Birch hereby incorporates its objections to Interrogatory No. 35. Birch objects on the grounds the request seeks documents that, because they relate to aspects of Birch' individual business model, are inconsistent with the analysis prescribed in the Triennial Review Order, are irrelevant to the analysis the TRA will conduct in this case, and not reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence. In addition, Birch objects to Request No. 10 on the grounds that the request seeks confidential and proprietary business information. Birch also objects to the request for "all documents" as overbroad and unduly burdensome.

Respectfully submitted,

BOULT, CUMMINGS, CONNERS & BERRY, PLC

By: 

Henry Walker
414 Union Street, Suite 1600
P.O. Box 198062
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 252-2363

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on November 6, 2003, a copy of the foregoing document was serviced on the parties of record, via US mail:

Guy Hicks, Esq.
BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc.
333 Commerce St., Suite 2101
Nashville, TN 37201

Charles B. Welch, Esq.
Farris, Mathews, et. al.
618 Church St., #300
Nashville, TN 37219

Timothy Phillips, Esq.
Office of Tennessee Attorney General
P. O. Box 20207
Nashville, TN 37202

H. LaDon Baltimore, Esq.
Farrar & Bates
211 Seventh Ave., N. #320
Nashville, TN 37219-1823

James Wright, Esq.
United Telephone – Southeast
14111 Capital Blvd.
Wake Forest, NC 27587

Martha M. Ross-Bain, Esq. HW 100071-030
AT&T Communications of the South Central
States, LLC
1200 Peachtree Street, Suite 8062
Atlanta, GA 30309

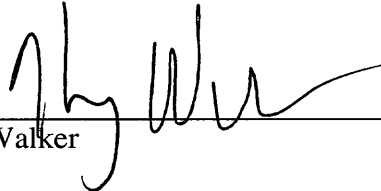
Ms. Carol Kuhnow
Qwest Communications, Inc.
4250 N. Fairfax Dr.
Arlington, VA 33303

Jon E. Hastings
Boult Cummings Conners Berry, PLC
P. O. Box 198062
Nashville, TN 37219-8062

Dale Grimes
Bass, Berry & Sims
315 Deaderick St., #2700
Nashville, TN 37238-3001

Mark W. Smith, Esq.
Strang, Fletcher, et. al.
One Union Square, #400
Chattanooga, TN 37402

Nanette S. Edwards, Esq.
ITC^DeltaCom
4092 South Memorial Parkway
Huntsville, AL 35802


Henry Walker